

**Charter of the
Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network
Inventory and Monitoring Program
Board of Directors**
Membership Revised January, 2004

Current Members of the Board of Directors

Keith Newlin, Superintendent

Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site
Johnstown Flood National Memorial

David Forney, Superintendent

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

John Donahue, Superintendent

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Calvin Hite, Superintendent

New River Gorge National River
Gauley River National Recreation Area
Bluestone National Scenic River

Ken Mabery, Superintendent

Fort Necessity National Battlefield
Friendship Hill National Historic Site

John Karish, PHSO Chief Scientist

Elizabeth Johnson, NER Inventory and Monitoring Coordinator

**Charter of the
Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network
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Board of Directors**

Amendment #1: January, 2004

Amendment #1 to the Charter for the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network was submitted to the Network's Board of Directors for approval. All Board Members who responded voted to accept the amendment. In accordance with the Network Charter, the amendment is accepted by consensus and the decision is confirmed by the Network Signatory.

John Karish, Chief Scientist

Date

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Approved October 2, 2002

Introduction

This charter supports the goals of the National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge to inventory and monitor ecosystem health on Park Service lands. The purpose of this document is to describe the basic practices to be used to plan, organize, manage, evaluate and modify the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network “Vital Signs” Monitoring Program. The Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network includes 10 parks:

- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA)
- Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE)
- New River Gorge National River (NERI)
- Bluestone National Scenic River (BLUE)
- Gauley River National Recreation Area (GARI)
- Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site (ALPO)
- Johnstown Flood National Memorial (JOFL)
- Fort Necessity National Battlefield (FONE)
- Friendship Hill National Historic Site (FRHI)
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA)

The Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network Board of Directors is comprised of, 5 park superintendents, the Northeast Region I & M Coordinator, the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network Coordinator, and the PHSO Chief Scientist. The Board of Directors will pursue a holistic approach in defining Network management issues and resources of concern, identifying the best place to monitor these resources using scientifically credible standards.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The major responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

- Require accountability and effectiveness for the I&M Program by reviewing progress, quality control, and spending of Network funds.
- Provide guidance to the Network Coordinator, Network Data Manager, Technical Steering Committee (See subgroups section) and natural resource staffs of the Network’s parks in the purpose, design and implementation of vital signs monitoring and other management activities related to the Natural Resource Challenge.

- Decide on strategies and procedures for leveraging Network funds and personnel to best accomplish inventory and monitoring and other natural resource needs of Network parks.
- Consult on hiring Network personnel using funding provided to the Network, including base funds and other sources.
- Seek additional financial support to leverage the Servicewide funds.
- Solicit professional guidance from and partnerships with other governmental agencies, organizations and individuals.
- Serve as advocates for the Natural Resource Challenge and promote understanding of the importance of the Inventory and Monitoring program among park staff, visitors and decision makers.

Procedures

Board Meetings: Any member can call a meeting of the Board, but there will be at least one formal meeting annually. If travel logistics are difficult to arrange then Board meetings may be held by telephone, video, or internet conference. All members will be notified of all meetings. Formal meetings will require a written agenda distributed at least one week before. When important decisions need to be made details must be included with the agenda so board members can decide whether to attend or send an alternate. At the end of each meeting members will be designated by the Board to arrange the logistics and agenda for the next meeting. Telephone conference meetings, to deal with a small number of topics, may be called by any member. Simple matters can be resolved via electronic mail.

Alternates and Quorums: Board meetings are open to Technical Steering Committee members and other invitees. Any Board member who cannot participate in a meeting of the Board may assign an alternate or participate via telephone or video conference. A park superintendent from the Network may not serve as the alternate, or carry the proxy of another park superintendent. If the above mentioned procedures for calling a board meeting are followed then all board members and designated alternates that attend will constitute a quorum; members who do not attend forfeit their right to vote and must accept the Board's decisions.

Decision Making: All decisions are made by consensus. Consensus is an outcome that all Board members can live with even if not ideal from any one viewpoint. If the Board cannot reach a consensus decision; then the matter, with all viewpoints represented, will be referred to the Regional Director for final resolution. All decisions will be documented with deadlines and responsible individuals identified. The Board of Directors will designate one member to sign documents for the Board once consensus is reached. The Board will designate one Superintendent who will participate in the panel for selection of key network staff.

Monitoring Plan: A monitoring plan covering the purpose, scope, objectives and goals of the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network's Inventory and Monitoring program will be developed by the Network I&M Coordinator, other Network staff, Cooperators and Technical Steering Committee. The monitoring plan will identify what will be monitored, where, when and how it will be monitored and how data will be managed, and will describe the relationship with other NPS programs and the I&M efforts of other land and resource managers. The Board of Directors

will approve this plan. The initial “Phase I” of the monitoring plan will be completed no later than October 2004.

Annual Work Plan and Report: Working with appropriate subgroups and others, the Network I&M Coordinator will present a proposed Annual Work Plan and an Annual Report of accomplishments to the Board for discussion, modification and approval no later than November 30th each year. The Annual Work Plan will identify proposed and actual accomplishments and products, responsible individuals and cooperators, funding and its sources (NPS and others), and budget. The Annual Report will contain management discussion and analysis to include specific accomplishments and products, lessons learned, coordination with others and a budget summary. A detailed accounting of the use of all I&M program funds assigned to each park and office will be appended to the Annual Report. This Annual Report will be widely distributed and posted on appropriate websites. The Annual Report will be released no later than December 31 of each year. Each year the Board and the Technical Steering Committee will prepare a budget for the travel, per diem and any other costs associated with the conduct of their meetings. These costs will be summarized in the Annual Work Plan.

Five Year Program Review: Five years from the completion of the Monitoring Plan the Network will undertake a comprehensive program review to be conducted by national and regional NPS specialists and qualified independent specialists from other agencies and organizations. The purpose of this review will be to evaluate accomplishments and products, protocols used for gathering data, data management, fiscal management, and staffing. The Program Review will provide the principal basis for any significant changes in program direction as well as reassignment of resources to any park or office.

Funding: Available I&M program funds will be distributed to Network projects, parks and offices as directed through the Annual Work Plan. An organizational code has been established for the Network and all I&M program funds must be strictly accounted for using a discrete PWE code and disclosed in the Annual Report. Using these funds for purposes other than in support of the Network’s strategic and monitoring plans constitutes cause for their reassignment within the Network. Additionally, funds contributed by parks, other NPS programs and other sources will be carefully tracked and reported on.

Staffing:

Staff hired under this program will be supervised and administratively supported by the Network I&M Coordinator in conjunction with the park or office at which they are stationed. The Network will provide administrative support for travel and training. The Network I&M Coordinator will be directly supervised by the Regional I&M Coordinator.

Subgroups

A standing Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network Technical Steering Committee will provide technical assistance and advice to the Board in developing a long-term monitoring strategy. This committee composition will be recommended by Network resource management staff and approved by the Board of Directors. The Technical Steering Committee will be responsible for:

- Compiling and summarizing existing information about park resources.
- Developing materials for and summarizing the findings and recommendations of any scoping workshops held to develop a Network monitoring strategy.
- Participating in the identification of monitoring objectives and development of the Network Strategic Plan.
- Assisting in the selection of vital signs.
- Coordinating peer review of protocols.
- Evaluating initial sampling designs, methods and protocols.
- Reviewing annual data reports and interpretation as well as participating in the preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Annual Report.
- Developing materials for and facilitating the Five Year Program Review.

The products and recommendations of the Technical Steering Committee will be presented to the Board by the Network Coordinator for discussion and approval or modification.

When needed the Board of Directors, Technical Steering Committee, Network I&M Coordinator and/or the Regional I&M Coordinator may form groups of specialists to work on a particular task or a particular sub-program area. No such group will be formed without inclusion of a specific “sunset” provision.

Coordination

To be most effective, the Board will need to maintain a close working relationship with the Chief of Natural Resources of each park in the Network, members of the Technical Steering Committee, the Network I&M Coordinator and the Regional I&M Coordinator. Board members are encouraged to participate in and/or keep informed with respect to the work of the Technical Steering Committee. The Network I&M Coordinator will be expected to provide regular briefings (by memoranda, electronic mail or telephone conference) to the Board.

Partnerships

The Network I&M Program must work with others to achieve its natural resource goals. The design and implementation of a successful “Vital Signs” monitoring program in the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network will require cooperation with public agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. The Network I&M program will include other land and resource managers (federal, state, and tribal) in the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network area. The Network Charter may be amended to identify the conditions under which Board membership may be expanded to include non-NPS participants. In no case will this be done without consensus of the Board.

Reporting

The Network I&M Coordinator will circulate Board and Technical Steering Committee meeting minutes and copies of the Annual Work Plan, Annual Report and Strategic Plan to all members of the Board and Technical Steering Committee. The Network I&M Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the Administrative Record and insuring fiscal accountability.

Amendments

The Board may amend this Charter at any time. The Network I&M Coordinator will provide a 30-day advanced notice to all Board members of any proposed amendments before they are voted on. Amendments will be made by consensus.

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Amendment #1: January, 2004

Amendment 1.

This amendment designates a Point of Contact for the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network (ERMN) National Park Service Species Database (NPSpecies) as follows:

I. ERMN Point of Contact Justification

The National Park Species database was developed by the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program to store, manage and disseminate scientific information on the biodiversity of organisms in National Parks throughout the United States and its territories. The master version of NPSpecies is a password-protected, web-based system; this is accompanied by a PC-based version that can be run from an individual computer using Microsoft Access. With the expansion of NPSpecies resulting from the completion of many data mining and inventory projects, The National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring Program has requested that networks and parks designate an official NPSpecies Point of Contact (POC) to streamline communication among parks, networks, and the national I&M program regarding NPSpecies status and issues.

This Amendment to the ERMN Charter defines the roles and responsibilities of the NPSpecies POC, designates a POC until the NPSpecies database for the network has been certified, and provides a means to change POC designation.

II. ERMN NPSpecies Point of Contact Responsibilities

1. Manage NPSpecies access. The POC will acquire login and password codes for all network park staff needing access to NPSpecies and will coordinate with WASO staff to ensure that the appropriate level of database permissions and control are granted (e.g., read only, read-edit, or read-edit-delete access). The POC shall be responsible for maintaining these permissions in the event of staff employment, duty station, or responsibility changes.

2. Provide orientation and technical support to park staff on NPSpecies use. The POC will orient NPSpecies users on the overall structure and function of NPSpecies and provide guidance on its use.

3. Convert legacy data sets into formats compatible with NPSpecies. The POC will work with park staff to locate data sets containing NPSpecies-related information and enter any appropriate information into NPSpecies.

4. *Ensure that voucher data obtained by WASO from national data mining efforts is accurately converted to NPSpecies and reviewed.* As WASO staff obtains park-specific data from national and regional museums and herbaria, the POC will ensure that these data are accurately converted to NPSpecies and that these data are made available for review by park-based staff.
5. *Ensure any new NPSpecies-related data collected from I&M or park projects are incorporated into NPSpecies.* The POC will work with I&M cooperators and park resource management staff to ensure that NPSpecies is properly updated to include any new data collected in the course of park research, management projects, or general operation.
6. *Ensure that sensitive data are designated as such and that user access permissions are coded appropriately.* The POC will ensure that sensitive records and NPSpecies user access permissions are appropriately coded. The POC will work with park staff to identify these records for each park.
7. *Ensure that species lists are reviewed by appropriate individuals and certified.* The completeness and accuracy of species-list data in NPSpecies will be assessed by qualified reviewers (park staff or other) on a regular basis (DO #11B: Ensuring Quality of Information Disseminated by the National Park Service). The POC will be responsible for ensuring this review and certification process is undertaken and completed.
8. *Ensure that new species vouchers are entered into ANCS+ and NPSpecies.*
9. *Ensure that species nomenclature used for park species lists is referenced and accepted by leading authorities, and, to the extent possible, is compatible among network parks.*
10. *Ensure that all sources of NPSpecies records are documented, and that additions, changes or deletions to records are substantiated and performed with the concurrence of park staff.*

Successful NPSpecies development and administration depends on ongoing coordination and good communication between the POC and park staff. A close working relationship between the POC and park resource management and curatorial staff will be emphasized at all times.

III. NPSpecies Point of Contact Designation

By this amendment, the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network Inventory and Monitoring Program Data Manager (Nathan Piekielek) is designated as the NPSpecies Point of Contact for park units within ERMN. As POC for each park the ERMN Data Manager will meet the responsibilities listed under Section II of this agreement. A centralized effort at the network level helps ensure high quality control standards and relieves park resource management staff from many of the ongoing tasks related to NPSpecies database management. Database work will be closely coordinated between the ERMN Data Manager and individual park staff and NPSpecies data will be readily accessible and available to park personnel.

IV. NPSpecies Point of Contact Designation Changes

The ERMN Data Manager will serve in the POC role for each park until such time that NPSpecies database is certified. Individual parks will have the choice of taking over the role of POC upon certification of the NPSpecies database or parks may continue to maintain the ERMN Data Manager as the park POC. Parks may request that the POC designation be changed at anytime and the ERMN Data Manager will keep track of POC designations.

Amendment Agreed to by all Network Board members and signed by the Network signatory.